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| Notice of Allowability | Application No. | Applicant(s) | |
| | 10/049,880 | FRIEDERICH ET AL. | |
| | Examiner | Art Unit | |
| | Deborah Yee | 1742 | |

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to telephone interview on Feb. 19, 2004.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1 to 12, 16 and 17.
3. ☒ The drawings filed on 2-19-02 in PCT(371) are accepted by the Examiner.
4. ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☒ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☒ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
7. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413), Paper No./Mail Date _____. |
| 3. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08), Paper No./Mail Date <u>6-26-02</u> | 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit of Biological Material | 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance |
| | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____. |

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it **MUST** be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Mr. Ronald Grudziecki on February 19, 2004.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 3, lines 3 and 4, ",preferably less than 30% and in particular less than 10%" has been deleted.

Claim 10, line 2, "bardening" has been changed to ---hardening---.

Also two new claims are incorporated into application:

16. (new) Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 1, wherein they are at least partly hardened in a surface layer, wherein the thickness of the precipitation hardened layer is less than 30% of the material thickness measured perpendicular to the surface.

17. (new)) Semi-finished and finished products according to claim 1, wherein they are at least partly hardened in a surface layer, wherein the thickness of the precipitation hardened layer is less than 10% of the material thickness measured perpendicular to the surface.

Art Unit: 1742

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance: The art of record does not teach or fairly suggest the semi-finished and finished products in the form of sheets, profiles or shafts made of corrosion-resistant, precipitation hardenable, austenitic special steel alloy composition, as claimed, with a high interstitially dissolved nitrogen content, with substantially smooth surfaces, wherein the steel material is precipitation hardened in a zoned manner; and the method of making said steel by working, heating and precipitation hardening inductively or by laser irradiation. Note that prior art does not teach precipitation hardening in a zone area but rather in a furnace for the entire volume of material. Also DE 19815670 teaches inductively hardening but only in the threaded area of a screw and not in a substantially smooth surface. The present invention is unique in that it provides a semi-finished and finished products having strength and corrosion resistance in optimized areas by using an inexpensive manufacturing method.

Information Disclosure Statement

The information disclosure statement filed June 26, 2002 fails to comply with 37 CFR 1.98(a)(3) because it does not include a concise explanation of the relevance, as it is presently understood by the individual designated in 37 CFR 1.56(c) most knowledgeable about the content of the information, of each patent listed that is not in the English language. It has been placed in the application file, but the information referred to therein has not been considered.

Art Unit: 1742

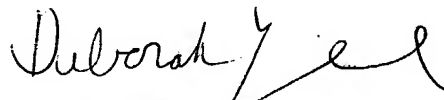
Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays; should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Deborah Yee whose telephone number is 571-272-1253. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday from 6:00 to 2:30.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Roy King can be reached on 571-272-1244.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

dy


DEBORAH YEE
PRIMARY EXAMINER